

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. (amended) A system for evaluating a company's customer equity, comprising:

either a point-of-sale terminal provided in a store, or a company's sales-management computer system that includes an e-commerce-transaction device, and an evaluating computer connected to the point-of-sale terminal or computer system via a communications line, including the Internet;

wherein the evaluating computer comprises

- a Web server connected to the Internet;
- a communications controller connected to a public communications line;
- an application server for performing customer-equity evaluations; and
- a database for recording purchase records received from a company or store;

the database comprises:

- a table of original records for recording purchase records in the order that they are generated;
- a master table of customers; and
- a tabulation table for sorting records by time period;

the application server comprises:

- a purchase-data collecting means for receiving purchase records from companies and then storing and recording these records in the table of original records;
- a customer-equity sorting means for determining the classification of individual-customer equity and recording these classifications in the master table of customers; and
- a customer-equity evaluation means for counting the records in the master table of customers and in the table of original records and evaluating the customer equity for each company;

the customer-equity evaluation means comprises:

- a total-customer-equity tabulating means;
- an average customer-equity tabulating means;
- a means of tabulating the customer-stability ratio; and
- a customer-equity growth-ratio tabulating means;

the customer-equity sorting means performs the following functions:

(1) sorting, into specific customer classifications, purchase records for a specific brand, product, or store that is the target of evaluation;

(2) determining the periods and frequency of purchase-record occurrences within an evaluation period that is divided into prescribed time periods in which repeated purchases or store visits can be expected for the specific brand, product, or store that is the target of evaluation;

(3) classifying customers into the three categories of (a) repeat customers, who are those who have made purchases in both the previous and current evaluation periods, (b) ex-customers, who made purchases in the previous evaluation period but who have made no purchases in the current evaluation period; and (c) new customers, who have begun making purchases in the current evaluation period; and

(4) recording the classification codes for these customers in the master table of customers;

the customer-equity evaluation means comprises

a total-customer-equity tabulating means for counting and recording the total number of customers who, based on the purchase records, had transactions during the evaluation period;

an average-customer-equity tabulating means for counting the monetary amounts of all purchases and for calculating and recording the purchase amount per customer;

an analytical matrix, in which are plotted targets of evaluation after being ranked and assigned symbols according to a ranking classification, and in which said matrix the vertical axis represents the purchase amount per customer as tabulated and recorded by said average-customer-equity tabulating means, and the horizontal axis represents the total number of customers as tabulated and recorded by said total-customer-equity tabulating means;

a means of tabulating the customer-stability ratio, for counting only the number of customers and purchase amounts for repeat customers, and for calculating and recording a customer-retention ratio as represented by the total number of customers and their total purchase amounts;

a customer-equity growth-ratio tabulating means that performs the following functions:

(1) counting the number of ex-customers (and calculating their purchase amounts) who made purchases in the previous evaluation period but made no purchases in the current evaluation period;

(2) calculating and recording the cumulative totals of the number of such ex-customers and their purchase amounts;

(3) counting the number of new customers (and calculating their purchase amounts) who began making purchases in the current evaluation period;

(4) calculating and recording the cumulative totals of the number of such new customers and their purchase amounts; and

(5) calculating and recording the ratios of new customers and their purchase amounts to ex-customers and their purchase amounts; and

an analytical matrix, in which the sales-improvement ratios of the targets of evaluation

are classified into rankings of the targets of evaluation in terms of ratios of increase, stability, and decrease of sales before and after an evaluation period, and in which symbols are plotted according to rankings, and wherein the horizontal axis represents the ratio of retained customers, who are repeat customers as tabulated and recorded by said means of tabulating the customer-stability ratio, while the vertical axis represents the ratios of the number of new customers and their purchase amounts to the number of ex-customers and their purchase amounts as tabulated and recorded by said customer-equity growth-ratio tabulating means.

2. (deleted)

3. (deleted)

4. (amended) A system for evaluating customer equity as recited in Claim 1, wherein the purchase records include at least one of a store code, a region code, or a purchase-classification code, and customer equity is evaluated according to such a code.